

GRIST FROM THE MILL FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS
COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE
September 2004



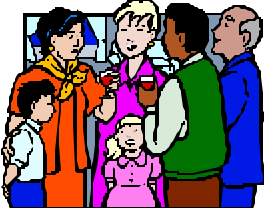
Fall Fun

Check out the enclosed fall brochure to find all the fun activities scheduled September through November. If there is an activity scheduled for a day that you are volunteering, be prepared for hordes of people wanting a tour of the mill to enhance their fun.



September 24-25 -- SPOOM Conference

Join other staff and volunteers at the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM) Conference on Friday, September 24 and Saturday, September 25 in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Visit local mills and learn about the fine arts of milling and interpreting. Sound interesting? For more information, check out www.spoom.org or see the posting on the bulletin board in the volunteer room.



October 2 9:30am – noon RMD Volunteer Excellence Awards

Celebrate outstanding volunteer service and cheer for Mike Moran and Mike Murphy, Colvin Run Mill's nominees for a Volunteer Excellence Award, at the Resource Management Division's Volunteer Excellence Reception and Brunch on Saturday October 2, from 9:30am - noon at Great Falls Grange.

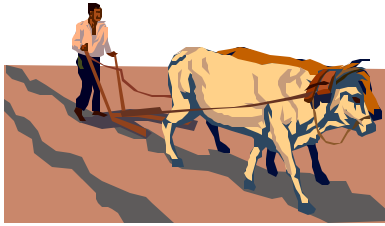
Explore Fairfax County's rural roots with agrarian activities, taste samples of corn breads made with Colvin Run Mill's cornmeal and enjoy a delicious brunch with food donated by Fresh Fields/Whole Foods. Then, applaud the division's 10+ and 20+ year volunteers and the Volunteer Excellence Award nominees and recipients. We hope to see you there! RSVP by September 17th to Erin Chernisky at 703-324-8750 or erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov



School Days & SOLs

Fairfax County Schools begin classes September 7; field trips generally begin in October. Please check your calendar to see if a group is scheduled for the day you volunteer, and be here 15 minutes before they are scheduled to arrive. This prevents staff from having heart palpitations while nervously scanning the parking lot for volunteers.

Teachers like coming to Colvin Run Mill because our program supports the Standards of Learning (SOLs) with hands-on activities. Science SOLs deal with force, motion, energy and simple machines. History and Social Science SOLs deal with 19th century rural community life -- its growth and change from a rural agricultural society to a more industrial urban society, and the factors that influenced these changes. Please keep the SOLs in mind during your interpretation.



Grinding or Farming – Which came first?

The Washington Post of August 5 contains an intriguing article about the early history of grinding. Thanks to Mike Moran for bringing it to our attention. The following is an excerpt; the complete article is posted on the bulletin board in the

volunteer room.

Scientists working in the flooded ruins of an ancient fishing camp in Israel have found evidence that the village's residents collected wild grain, pounded it into flour and possibly baked bread at least 10,000 years before the advent of cultivated crops.

Researchers found traces of barley and perhaps other grain in the seams of a grinding stone unearthed at Ohalo II, a settlement that stood on the southwest shore of the Sea of Galilee 22,000 years ago. The discovery is the oldest evidence yet found of humans processing cereal grains.

The research adds a new twist to the still-mysterious story of how agriculture evolved, showing that humans began collecting and preparing cereals perhaps thousands of years before they contemplated growing it themselves.

French or American Stones?



Georgia Burr Millstones

Are those really French burr stones lining the hillside, or are some of them Georgia burrs? An article in the summer edition of *Old Mill News* explores the history of Georgia burr stones.

During the War of 1812, trade with France became increasingly difficult and millers searched for a substitute for French burr stones. Georgia quarries came to the rescue. From 1810, when a Georgia burr was sent to Oliver Evans, who was favorably impressed, until about the 1860s, more than 1,000 burr stones were quarried in Georgia and sold in Georgia, Alabama, the Carolinas and Virginia, as well as Brandywine, Pennsylvania. There was great hype that Georgia stones would soon replace the French stones in American mills. However, an 1876 issue of *Manufacturer and Builder* reported that the Georgia quarry had been abandoned since the stones produced there proved inferior to the traditional French stones. The French burr stones retained their spot as the world's best millstone.

You can read this fascinating article in its entirety in the *Old Mill News* in the volunteer office.



Wanted: Panty hose

The scarecrows are coming in October! We'll have lots of straw for making scarecrows this fall and participants bring an outfit, but hundreds of scarecrows will be in desperate need of a good head on their shoulders. We welcome donations of old pantyhose and tights to be reincarnated as scarecrow heads.



Congratulations

Mary and John Dettra have been triply blessed this summer with the birth of not one, not two, but three granddaughters. Emma (one of our favorite names) was born in June, Peighton arrived on July 27 and six days later Julie was born – each to a different one of the four Dettra sons, of course. Mary is thrilled to have three more grandchildren, but emphasizes that there are no more blessed events expected this year.



Welcome Back

Marvin, Alvin, Fred and Matilda (otherwise known as the puppets) were overjoyed to hear that their creator and favorite person had returned to the area and would soon resume volunteering. Crystal Allison volunteered at Colvin Run Mill from 1995 to 1997, recruiting her husband, Vernon, for special programs. In 1997, the Allisons left for Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. They returned in 1998 and Crystal volunteered for a couple more years before leaving with Vernon for MacDill AFB in Tampa. We were excited when Crystal emailed us that Vernon was retiring from the Army and had accepted a job in the local area. They even bought a house just across Rte. 7 from the mill -- just to be close to us, I'm sure. Crystal has unpacked most of the boxes and is ready to begin volunteering in September.



Fall Leavings

Fall means the start of college and the dispersal of our summer help. Renae Smith, who ran the summer children's programs, is going off to Grove City College in Pennsylvania. Amy Whipple goes back to Longwood College for her senior year, but promised to come back for our new *Taste of Colvin Run Mill* program in October. Kyle Sullivan, blacksmith and budding environmentalist, has returned to Colorado State. Erika will work only Sundays in the general store so that she can devote more time to her nursing program studies at George Mason. Kevin Gawthrop will continue as Mason's dusty on Sundays, but will be back in school during the week.

To help replace our departing summer help, Kerry Roy joins the site staff in September. She will work on programs and assist in the general store on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays.

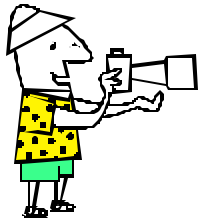


From the Miller's Corner

It has been two years since our millstones were dressed by millwright Derek Ogden and assistant Ben Hassett. Since then, the almost-weekly grinding of corn has glazed and dulled the stone. Corn contains more oil than wheat and this oil dulls the sharp furrow edges after just one grinding; repeated grinding creates a fine oily glaze that blunts the dressing lines and polishes the furrows, retarding the removal of the bran.

Millers would have ground corn on different millstones, saving the sharp buhr for producing fine flour.

Mason Maddox borrowed some English thrifts of wood or wood with iron fittings from Derek. The thrifts are fitted with interchangeable mill pick heads of steel with carbide tips. Between other jobs, Mason has been using them to dress the stones. Each mill stone requires over 8 hours of defining the stitching (fine lines) and roughing the furrow of every one of the 17 quarters or sections on each millstone. The newly defined stitching is clearly visible and the roughness of the furrows is obvious to the touch. We are looking forward to producing some fine wheat flour, on a par with flour produced in the finest 19th century gristmill.



Arti-facts from Dawn

“May I take a picture?” Do you know how to answer that question? Jeanne Niccolls recently issued a *Guidelines for Photography and Filming of FCPA Historic Objects* that outlines county policy based on professional guidelines.

Generally the public may photograph site interiors and outbuildings where historic objects are exhibited for their own personal use. While the light damage to collections resulting from flash photography is negligible, camera flashes may disrupt interpretation and annoy other visitors. Site staff may use their discretion in permitting the use of flash camera.

On the Road with Bob and Marge

Baltimore County, Maryland was once a large milling center. Bob and Marge have spend many days seeking out old mill sites and examining mill ruins to piece together the story of the area’s early industrial past.

BEE TREE MILL



This mill is located at 224 Bee Tree Road just south of SR 439—also called York Road. You can access this road from highway 45. Bee Tree Rd. is narrow and rather steep. We never did get to the bottom of the hill. The mill is on private property. There is no place to park near the mill but this is a spectacular and unusual mill.

Our farmer friend that we met at the gas station told us that he remembers cutting ice from the pond in the winter months and afterwards having

a sip of cider before heading home. In the 1960’s only cider was being produced at the mill.

The mill is a log-frame structure that is in A-1 condition. As we walked past the mill, there was the sluice gate. Three buildings were near the gate. The dam appeared to be intact although the millpond has silted up and contains a very small quantity of water. Nature has taken over the millpond. This mill does not appear to be an Oliver Evans’ designed mill. The mill is a nineteenth century two storey mill that made cider at one time.



This land was known as Long Valley and has been owned by the Sampson and Simpson families. The mill was first mentioned in the 1823 tax list as belonging to Daniel Sampson. In 1849 Caleb W. Royston bought the property from a Nicholas Sampson. By 1865 the Simpson family was the owner. W. H. Simpson, in November 1874 reported that his cherry tree was in full bloom and that he spotted seventy-five geese on his millpond. W. H. Simpson was the last operator of the mill and died around 1970. The mill has not operated since

his death.

On a hill, high above the mill, is the miller's house. The house has a great view of the valley.

Since we could not talk to anyone, further information about this mill was not found. There might be grist milling machinery inside the mill or cider making machinery or no machinery at all. This is a mill we recommend seeing, if only as a drive by.